



Hepatitis Health

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MAY 2013



KNOW
MORE
HEPATITIS

May is Hepatitis Awareness Month

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Millions of Americans are living with viral hepatitis but most do not know they are infected. People can live with chronic hepatitis for decades without having any symptoms.

The month of May is designated as Hepatitis Awareness Month in the United States, and May 19th is Hepatitis Testing Day. During May, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and its public health partners work to shed light on this hidden epidemic by raising awareness of viral hepatitis and encouraging priority populations to get tested. National Hepatitis Awareness Month was first established by the CDC in 2001.

The CDC is also launching the National Prevention Information Network (NPIN) sponsored Hepatitis Testing Day Event page again this year! The page allows people to use their zip code to find a testing site. To make the page useful to everyone across the U.S., CDC needs your help. If you are hosting an event, please go to Hepatitis Testing Day Event page and register your event today. (Go to their homepage at <http://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/> and click on the logo on the right side.)

Find out if you are at risk. Take a five minute Hepatitis Risk Assessment developed by CDC and receive a personalized report. This assessment will help determine if you should be vaccinated and/or tested for viral hepatitis. This on-line risk assessment is also available on the CDC viral hepatitis homepage.



Division of Disease Control & Health Protection

Black History Month

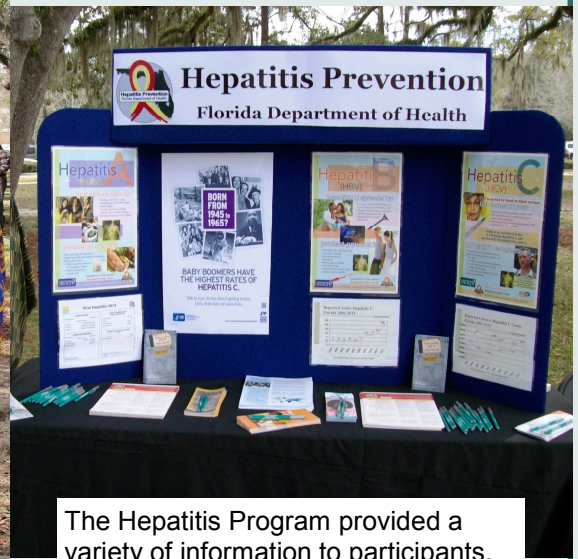
By Cheryl Graham, CPM, Office of Minority Health

This year's Black History Month theme was: "At the Crossroads of Freedom and Equality: The Commemoration of the 150th Anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation and the 50th Anniversary of the March on Washington."

The Florida Department of Health's Office of Minority Health (OMH) planned a month-long series of activities in February to help educate and bring awareness to employees about Black/African American history and culture. One such event, Culture Day in the Park, took place in Tallahassee at the Capital Circle Office Center (CCOC). Several Department of Health (DOH) bureaus highlighted their programs with exhibits and educational materials. We also featured great music, a little dancing and a Black/African Attire Fashion Show.



Left to right: Janelle Burgess, Cheryl Graham, Kim Ingram, Sylvia McDaniel, Jayne Rowe-Lincoln, Nikita Wiggins, Barbara Baker, Adam Shideler and Ron Burger.



The Hepatitis Program provided a variety of information to participants.



Mike Mason, Director of the Office of Minority Health



Kim Ingram leads everyone in a fun dance routine.

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National Public Health Week

The first week in April is National Public Health Week. It is celebrated by focusing attention on issues that promote health, wellness and safety across the country. DOH Headquarters in Tallahassee held an open house where staff could visit and learn about the important work that we each do. The Division of Disease Control and Health Protection kicked things off the first day with displays and other information in the lobby of their building. It was a great opportunity to showcase our public health activities with our colleagues.



Sheila Price, HIV/AIDS & Hepatitis Section



Philip Cavicchia (left side) and Jim Matthias from the Bureau of Epidemiology



From the Bureau of Environmental Health: Israel Juarbe, Biomedical Waste Program in the Facility Programs section; and Bob Vincent, Water Programs



Joy Cross-Smith provided facts about TB



Halima Dumas, CDC Public Health Advisor, Immunization Section



The Bureau of Communicable Diseases exhibit presented information about each of the bureau's public health disciplines: TB, STD, Immunization, HIV/AIDS and hepatitis

Division of Disease Control & Health Protection

Corrections Infections Workgroup

From the DOH HIV/AIDS & Hepatitis Section's 2012 Overview Report
of Florida's Corrections Programs

The Corrections Infections Workgroup, led by the HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis Section, is a collaborative effort comprising members from the Department of Juvenile Justice, Department of Corrections, Department of Children and Families (Substance Abuse and Mental Health office), Sexually Transmitted Disease Program, and the Tuberculosis Program. The workgroup is dedicated to information sharing, program development and education, and advocacy on issues related to HIV/AIDS, STD, TB, and hepatitis in correctional settings. The workgroup meets quarterly and strives to improve infectious disease screening and healthcare for inmates across the state of Florida.

In 2012, through collaborative efforts with the Department of Corrections, the TB Program identified 13 TB cases in the prison system. Two of these cases were co-infected with HIV. In 2012, the DOH jail linkage programs tested 30,614 inmates for HIV and identified 205 positives for an overall positivity rate of 0.7%.

The Hepatitis Prevention Program provided outreach to a total of 7,232 inmates and prisoners through 15 funded county health departments during calendar year 2012. This often includes hepatitis A and B vaccines and testing for viral hepatitis.

The STD Program continues screening efforts at intake reducing the disease burden and risk of potential spread of STDs in the prison population.



Standing left to right: Jeffrey Cece with Department of Children and Families, Dr. Stephen Harris from Department of Corrections, Kathy McLaughlin with Correctional Medical Authority, and Sherrie Arnwine, TB Section. Sitting left to right: Mia Rosario and Allison Roberts from the HIV/AIDS & Hepatitis Section.

May 15th is National Hispanic Hepatitis Awareness Day

This year's theme, "**LET'S TALK ABOUT HEPATITIS**," will integrate viral hepatitis awareness with screening and testing, prevention and education, connecting people to care, treatment education, and patient advocacy. By facilitating partnerships, hosting community events that encourage people to seek testing and treatment, and by developing and disseminating prevention strategies, they will be promoting healthy communities.



The Latino Commission on AIDS, in conjunction with local, regional and national partners, actively participates in the planning process and will assist you with any request you may have organizing your local or regional event. For more information on National Hispanic Hepatitis Awareness Day (NHHAD) contact Bethsy Morales-Reid, NHHAD Director, (212) 675-3288 or bmorales@hispanichepatitisday.org. You can also visit their website at :<http://www.hispanichepatitisday.org>

EASY C FACTS

What Is ALT?

There are many different kinds of blood tests to tell a doctor if the liver is damaged. One of the most common blood tests used will measure alanine aminotransferase (ALT for short) levels in your blood. ALT's are chemicals that are released by the liver into the blood when the liver is damaged or sick. **High levels of ALT can be caused by many things like alcohol, drugs, toxins, and viruses such as hepatitis C (HCV or**

Hep C for short).

Unfortunately, it is not a perfect test for people with HCV – most people with normal ALT levels will have little damage, but some people can still have ongoing liver damage. In the past, if people with HCV had normal ALT levels, they were not treated with HCV medications; but now doctors will treat hepatitis C with HCV medications if there are other signs that the liver is damaged.

Remember.....

- ◆ If your ALT level is high it means that something is going on in the liver, but it could be caused by many things.
- ◆ Most people with normal ALT levels will not have liver damage, but for some people with HCV and normal ALT levels the liver will become damaged over time.
- ◆ If you have normal ALT's talk with your doctor or nurse to find out if you should be treated.

www.hcvadvocate.org

by Alan Francis

HEPATITIS C
SUPPORT PROJECT

1/2013

In Memory of Bob Keane

By April Crowley

Robert F. "Bob" Keane, 67, of New Port Richey, died April 8, 2013. Bob retired from the Hepatitis Prevention Program at Pinellas County Health Department (CHD) in 2007. Pinellas was one of the six original counties funded for a comprehensive hepatitis program in 2000. Bob, a former police officer, was an LPN who diligently worked to give the best service possible to people who were at risk for viral hepatitis.

Due to a heart condition, Bob left the police department and began a second career in public health. He once said that he felt like his past experience as a police officer helped him be a better nurse. In 2006, during a Quality Improvement (QI) visit to Pinellas, headquarters staff were fascinated by the amount of outreach conducted by Bob and the rest of the hepatitis staff. Their outreach included visits to the Pinellas County Jail and to various events like the St. Petersburg Jazz Festival. Much of it involved working nights and weekends.

During his time at the Pinellas CHD, Bob helped develop a program that was pro-active in the community as well as client friendly. He constantly generated outreach programs to get the message out to populations in high-risk areas. Bob collaborated with the jail to set up an education program for inmates. He arranged screening and vaccine with local methadone programs, rehab centers and the community at large. He sought ways for the CHD to become actively involved with the local free hepatitis clinic and hepatitis support groups. He provided intelligent and efficient services and had a great sense of humor.

Bob also served on the Florida Viral Hepatitis Council (VHC) from 2006 to 2008. The VHC provides advice and guidance to the HIV/AIDS & Hepatitis Section on issues related to viral hepatitis, and writes and updates goals and objectives related to the prevention of viral hepatitis.

The best way to describe Bob is that he was a supportive voice for the less fortunate in his community. The Hepatitis Prevention Program gratefully acknowledges Bob's contribution to hepatitis prevention in Florida. He is survived by his wife, Jean, three sons and three grandchildren.



Bob Keane, his wife Jean, and Debbie Barnes at the annual *Award of Excellence for Service to our Community* dinner & silent auction in Gulfport, September 2006. This benefit for the Chance Center honored those who have served the Tampa Bay community and helped improve the quality of life for those with liver disease.



Bob Keane received the "Making a Difference Award" from Phil Reichert (on right) at the Florida Hepatitis Educational Conference held in Orlando, June 2007.

Co-Chairs from Florida Community Planning Network Hold Annual Meeting

By Phil Reichert

The community and public health co-chairs from the HIV Patient Care Planning Group, the HIV Prevention Planning Group and the Viral Hepatitis Council met in Tampa on April 3rd for their annual comparison of notes. The main topic of discussion at this combined meeting was providing services to individuals at risk for HIV and viral hepatitis.



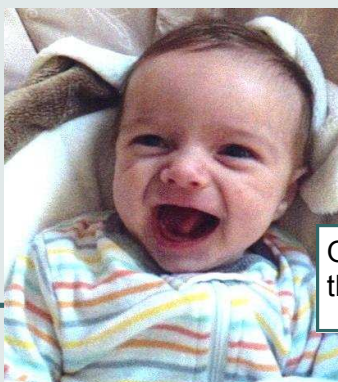
Phil Reichert

These three planning bodies, each made up of about twenty community and public health representatives, comprise the Florida Community Planning Network (FCPN). Each group is tasked with developing a comprehensive plan which guides the Florida Department of Health HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis Section of the Bureau of Communicable Diseases in prevention and patient care efforts. The HIV plans can be accessed at www.floridaaids.org. The hepatitis comprehensive plan can be found at www.flahepatitis.org.

The co-chair meeting was scheduled between semi-annual meetings of the HIV Patient Care Planning Group (PCPG) and the HIV Prevention Planning Group (PPG). The agendas of both groups were packed with business items and numerous topics of interest. The list of items for each group included an overview of up-to-date topics in the world of viral hepatitis prevention and treatment. Other discussions looked at gaps in services, doing needs assessments, updating the bylaws of each group and reviewing specific initiatives for the purpose of updating activities.



Representatives of the HIV Prevention Planning Group and guests from the April meeting in Tampa



Hepatitis Health is brought to you by the HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis Section, Bureau of Communicable Diseases, at the Florida Department of Health. Submit your articles and photos to: April.Crowley@doh.state.fl.us

On a personal note: Phil and Becky Reichert became grandparents for the first time on February 6, 2013, with the arrival of Harvey.

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